

“Hands are for Helping NOT Hurting”

Child Abuse Awareness Month

April 2013

“I really didn’t think there was child abuse in their house!! Looking back, I guess I have seen both parents spank/slap their children with excessive force and there were those bruises...I would never spank my child that hard.”

“I didn’t want to intrude in their life. I didn’t want to sound like I was telling them how to discipline or how to interact with their children. They do yell at their kids all of the time and call them worthless, stupid and a waste of their money.”

All of these statements start with an “I” and follow with a statement of uncertainty including warning signs of and/or abuse. Often times when child abuse is exposed there are several individuals who start to think about the early signs and think of the “could have or should have.” When there is potential abuse of a child there should never be a “could have or should have” statement. The *suspected* abuse must be reported immediately. The “I” statement needs to be turned into “I stood up for this child and saved their life” and “I helped to ensure they are being treated properly.” A child needs a voice, bigger and stronger than theirs to stand up for them and ensure their basic rights are not being violated. According to childhelp.org, in 2002; a report of child abuse is made every 10 seconds and more than 5 children die each day as a result of child abuse. Child abuse is a preventable epidemic which is often masked by society. Child abuse does not discriminate, it can occur to any child in any environment including but not limited to the child’s home, daycare, school, friend’s house, or another family member’s home. Early intervention and prevention are paramount in decreasing the number of children who suffer from maltreatment.

The Family Advocacy Program at Cannon Air Force Base is the primary office responsible for preventing and treating family maltreatment involving Active Duty members and their dependents. According to DoD Directive 6400.1 & AFI 40-301: Unit Commanders, First Sergeants, and Supervisors (military or civilian) must be familiar with FAP procedures and policies. Active Duty members and civilian employees are mandated to report all incidents of *suspected* family maltreatment to the Family Advocacy Officer. Please contact our office today #784-2474 to make a confidential and anonymous report of child maltreatment.

The Family Advocacy Program offers a wide range of prevention classes including parenting, couples communication and anger management. The New Parent Support Program offers educational classes, in home personal instruction and phone consultation for any parent who is expecting and/or has a child under the age of three. Help us help our military families by early detection and prevention of child abuse! Call us today to enroll in a class and/or to find out what you can do show our military children that “Hands are for Helping NOT Hurting” and join in the fight against Child Abuse!!

Please read below the official proclamation by the President of the United States of America.

Presidential Proclamation -- National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 2013

NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH, 2013

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

America is a country where all of us should be able to pursue our own measure of happiness and live free from fear. But for the millions of children who have experienced abuse or neglect, it is a promise that goes tragically unfulfilled. National Child Abuse Prevention Month is a time to make their struggle our own and reaffirm a simple truth: that no matter the challenges we face, caring for our children must always be our first task.

Realizing that truth in our society means ensuring children know they are never alone -- that they always have a place to go and there are always people on their side. Parents and caregivers play an essential part in giving their children that stability. But we also know that keeping our children safe is something we can only do together, with the help of friends and neighbors and the broader community. All of us bear a responsibility to look after them, whether by lifting children toward their full potential or lending a hand to a family in need.

Our Government shares in that obligation, which is why my Administration has made addressing child abuse a priority. Since I took office, we have advocated for responsible parenting and invested in programs that can give our sons and daughters a strong start in life. I was also proud to sign measures into law that equip State and local governments with the tools to take on abuse, like the CAPTA Reauthorization Act and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act.

Together, we are making important progress in stopping child abuse and neglect. But we cannot let up -- not when children are still growing up looking for a lifeline, and not when more than half a million young people are robbed of their basic right to safety every year. So this month, let us stand up for them and make their voices heard. To learn more about ending child abuse and how to get involved, visit www.ChildWelfare.gov/Preventing.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2013 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month with programs and activities that help prevent child abuse and provide for children's physical, emotional, and developmental needs.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand thirteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-seventh.

BARACK OBAMA